

Middlesex/Union Counties ALB Infestation

Tree replanting continued this week in all four towns of the Middlesex/Union Counties ALB infestation area. The Department of Environmental Protection's Forest Service is replacing 556 trees in Carteret, 391 in Linden, 307 in Rahway and 173 in Woodbridge in this fall's planting, a total of 1,427. The tree-planting project is part of the first phase of the \$1.6 million reforestation effort to replace the 5,400 trees removed because of the beetle infestation. The project is funded through a grant supplied by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service.

The replacement trees are approximately 10 feet tall and 2-3 inches in diameter. A variety of non-host tree species are available, including eastern redbud, ginkgo, Kentucky coffeetree, magnolia, Japanese tree lilac, dogwood, Douglas-fir, littleleaf linden, Atlas cedar, serviceberry, American holly and arborvitae.

As colder weather sets in, work will begin soon on what is hoped to be the final phase of tree removal in the Middlesex/Union counties ALB infestation area. All trees targeted for takedown in Carteret, Woodbridge and Rahway were removed over the summer. Left to come down are new infested trees found in Linden in late summer and the high-risk host trees surrounding them. As was done last year, tree takedown will begin after the weather turns cold enough to kill off any live beetles that may be in those trees, thereby avoiding dispersing them to other trees.

On October 27, the Carteret Borough Council honored borough residents Don Base and Joan Karackiewicz for their roles in spotting and reporting the beetle in August 2004. Don first called the beetle hotline, 1-866-BEETLE-1 on August 2, 2004 to report seeing the beetle on a tree in his front yard. After seeing a television report several weeks later about the ALB tree-climbing survey beginning in Carteret, Joan called the hotline to report she and her husband, Dave, had also seen the beetle, which led to finding the heart of the Middlesex/Union infestation in and around a mobile home park. Carteret Mayor Daniel Reiman thanked them both at the Council meeting for saving untold months or even years of damage to trees in the area by reporting their sightings. New Jersey ALB Program Director Barry Emens presented Don and Joan with paperweights that included ALB specimens encased inside. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture honored Don and Joan for their contribution at an Arbor Day ceremony in Rahway earlier this year.